THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • THURSDAY • FEBRUARY 26, 2026 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 22 • LATE CITY EDITION

READ SHARE FOLLOW
newindianexpress.com
facebook.com/thenewindianxpress twitter.com/newindianxpress
instagram.com/newindianexpress

SLEW OF DEMANDS MESSES UP BSNL DIRECTOR'S VISIT TO PRAYAGRAJ

BSNL director Vivek Banzal is in the line of fire for making 'absurd' demands linked to his proposed Prayagraj trip. He now faces a show-cause notice

WANTED *SNAN* KITS FOR A DIP AT THE SANGAM

Banzal sought six male and two female *snan* kits for a dip at the Sangam, including towels, undergarments, slippers, combs, mirrors, soap, shampoo, oil and a bed sheet, for general use at the ghat. Hotel and Circuit House arrangements included toiletries, shaving kits, dry fruits, fruit bowls and towels. He also wanted a boat ride and visits to a few temples

UNACCEPTABLE IN NEW INDIA, SAYS SCINDIA

- The visit scheduled for February 25-26 was cancelled pending a full inquiry. Banzal (pic) is due to superannuate by September-end | **P12**
- Communications minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said an order like this is 'unacceptable' in new India, adding it flouts all rules and traditions and is 'beyond absurd'. Banzal became BSNL director in October 2018

50

PERSONNEL HAD TO BE ASSIGNED TO FULLY MANAGE BANZAL'S TRIP

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

NCERT to rewrite judiciary chapter after SC rebuke

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY & S LALITHA @ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Wednesday took suo motu cognizance of the controversial chapter on 'judicial corruption' in NCERT's Class 8 social science book and expressed its strong displeasure, forcing the body to issue an apology and offering to rewrite the contentious text.

A three-judge bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi listed the matter for Thursday after senior advocates Kapil Sibal and Abhishek Singhvi mentioned the matter for urgent consideration.

"This seems to be a very calculated and deep-rooted measure," the CJI said.

Justice Bagchi observed that the book seems to go against the basic structure of the Constitution.

Following the SC's strong remarks, the NCERT held a high-level meeting on Wednesday evening, which went on till midnight. After the marathon meeting, it issued a statement late in the night, apologising for the "inappropriate textual material" and its "error of judgement".

"It has been observed that certain inappropriate textual material and error of judgement have inadvertently crept into Chapter No 4, entitled "The Role of Judiciary in our Society"... The aforesaid error is purely unintentional and NCERT regrets the inclusion of inappropriate material in the said chapter," it said, adding there was no intent to question or diminish the authority of any constitutional body.

It clarified that the chapter would be rewritten "with consultation from the appropriate authority" and the revised book would be made available to students.

On Tuesday, the book was removed from sales by the Publications Division of NCERT. An official said the online version was yet to be uploaded.

The controversy was over a section in the text book on 'corruption in the judiciary' in a chapter titled *The role of the judiciary in our society*. While explaining the concept of judicial accountability, it notes that judges are bound by a code of conduct that requires them to remain fair and impartial and maintain integrity in their professional and personal lives.

When these standards are not upheld, the chapter said that the judiciary has internal mechanisms to ensure accountability. It also mentions that in serious cases, judges can be removed by Parliament through impeachment.

Book flags backlog

The chapter pegs the number of pending cases in the Supreme Court at 81,000, in high courts at 62.4 lakh, and in district and subordinate courts at 4.7 crore

Terror anywhere threatens peace everywhere, Modi tells Knesset

Says India's connection to Israel is written in blood and sacrifice; calls for diplomacy, peace

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday reiterated India's strategic partnership with Israel in an address to the Knesset and said "India's connection to Israel is written in blood and sacrifice" and "nothing can justify terrorism."

Becoming the first Indian PM to address the Israeli parliament, Modi framed India-Israel ties through the lens of shared security challenges and historical bonds. Recalling that more than 4,000 Indian soldiers laid down their lives in the region during World War I, he said the relationship was rooted in "blood and sacrifice", not merely diplomacy.

In a direct reference to the October 7 Hamas assault and the 2008 Mumbai attacks, Modi drew parallels between the two nations' experiences. "We feel your pain. We share your grief. India stands with Israel firmly, with full conviction, in this moment and beyond," he said.

"No cause can justify the murder of civilians. Nothing can justify terrorism," Modi asserted, underlining India's "consistent and uncompromising policy of zero tolerance for terrorism, with no double standards."

He warned that terrorism seeks "to destabilise societies, block development and erode trust," adding that "countering terrorism requires sustained and coordinated global action, because terror anywhere threatens peace everywhere."

Even as he struck a hard line on terror, Modi balanced his remarks with a call for diplomacy. "The road to peace is not always easy, but India joins you and the world for dialogue, peace and stability in this region," he said, expressing support for efforts that could lead to a durable peace, including in Gaza.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hailed the visit as historic, calling the partnership "an enormous multiplier of our individual powers". Terming Modi as "a great friend to Israel," he said their deep personal rapport reflected the strength of bilateral ties.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses the Knesset, Israel's parliament, as Speaker Amir Ohana looks on, in Jerusalem on Wednesday | SHLOMI AMSALEM

'AMBITIOUS' FTA TALKS ON: PM

Modi outlined plans to broaden the economic pillar of the partnership, including talks on an "ambitious" FTA. "We are committed to expanding trade, strengthening investment flows, and promoting joint infra development." Referring to the Bilateral Investment Treaty signed last year, he said it would "provide confidence, predictability to our businesses"

Elevated to a strategic partnership in 2017, India–Israel relations have expanded significantly in defence, technology, cybersecurity and innovation. Modi's visit — his second as PM — comes amid heightened regional tensions, reinforcing converging geopolitical interests and deepening security cooperation between the two countries. The Knesset conferred the 'Speaker of the Knesset Medal', its highest honour, on Modi.

Solar cells to face 126% anti-subsidy duty in US

PUSHPITA DEY @ New Delhi

THE US has imposed a countervailing duty of 126% on imports of solar cells and modules from India, alleging that Indian manufacturers benefit from significant government subsidies. Similar duties have been levied on Indonesia and Laos.

Countervailing duties, also known as anti-subsidy duties, are tariffs imposed to offset the harmful effects of foreign government subsidies on imports.

The decision follows an investigation by the US International Trade Commission, which found that subsidised imports were causing material injury to domestic producers.

In parallel, the US Department of Commerce is conducting anti-dumping duty investigations into solar cell imports. The department selected two Adani Group entities – Mundra Solar Energy and Mundra Solar PV – as mandatory respondents. The case turned more adverse after both firms withdrew from the investigation and did not provide complete responses.

"This level of countervailing duty will shut the US market for Indian solar panel exports. That is typically the outcome when the US imposes countervailing duties – exports of the affected product from the targeted country become commercially unviable," said Abhijit Das, former head of the Centre for WTO Studies at IIFT.

EXPRESS READ

20 ABVP activists arrested for vandalism, assault

Bengaluru: Sarjapura police on Wednesday arrested 20 activists of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) for trespassing and assaulting security guards and a student, as well as vandalising property, on the Azim Premji University premises on Tuesday. The ABVP activists allegedly went on a rampage during their protest against a programme held on the university premises, which they termed as "anti-national" | **P3**

DIRTY MONEY

Vigilance officials count seized currency notes following a raid at the residence of Deputy Director of Mines Debabrata Mohanty (inset) in connection with a bribery case, in Bhubaneswar on Wednesday. Over ₹4cr cash was recovered | EXPRESS | **P7**

Protests pay off, state to fill 60k govt posts

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Bengaluru

AS pressure mounts and protests intensify for recruitment to government posts, the state government plans to fill up close to 60,000 vacancies and is working with various departments to finalise the exact number.

Hundreds of job aspirants came out on the streets in Dharwad on Tuesday, expressing anger against the government for not issuing job recruitment notifications. They had protested earlier, too. Sources in the finance department said they have agreed on large-scale recruitment. "We are fine with agreeing for more. We are working with departments to finalise numbers," they said.

Two months ago, the High Court of Karnataka had restrained the state government from increasing reservation under the Karnataka Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Reservation of Seats in Educational Institutions and Appointments or Posts in Services under the State) Act, 2022.

"No further notifications for recruitment or appointments on the basis of increased reservation should be issued till the petitions are disposed of. Recruitments that have already begun may be continued, but appointments should be subject to the final outcome of the present petitions," the high court had stated.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is likely to announce the recruitment process in his budget speech on March 6 | EXPRESS

Labour Minister Santosh Lad, who is also Dharwad District In-charge Minister, told TNIE that the state government is keen on filling up 56,000–58,000 posts. "The hearing is on March 3. Once we get clearance, notification for the posts will be issued," he said. Sources said CM Siddaramaiah, who is presenting his budget on March 6, may announce it in his speech.

Karnataka has more than 7.5 lakh sanctioned posts in more than 70 government departments, of which 2.84 lakh posts are vacant at present. On average, 25,000 posts fall vacant every year. For several years, successive governments have not taken up recruitment in big numbers for various reasons, including the Covid pandemic, financial implications, legal hurdles and other issues.

Kerala Story2

HC STALLS RELEASE TILL PLEAS HEARD

Kerala HC has posted the matter for final hearing on Thursday at 9.45am | **P7**

DKS: Guarantee schemes are a burden on govt

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

ADMITTING that the Guarantee Schemes are a significant financial burden on the state exchequer, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said that the government, however, continues to implement them in the interest of the people.

Shivakumar, also the president of the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee, said at the launch of 'Kusuma Sanjeevini' on Wednesday that the schemes would continue to ensure people do not lose mental strength during difficult times. He said these welfare measures are designed to ease economic pressure on families and provide a sense of security. "These are meant to support vulnerable sections and ensure that citizens can lead dignified lives despite financial challenges," he added.

Shivakumar said the schemes are also a way to instill confidence and resilience among people. "Even though it may be a burden on the state exchequer, it is our responsibility to ensure that families do not feel helpless during crises. We want every citizen to feel empowered and supported," he said.

The logjammed state of infra projects

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

KARNATAKA is among the fastest-growing states in the country. While the state continues to maintain robust growth, many key infrastructure initiatives, including airports, public transportation, and irrigation projects, have been on hold for decades due to procedural delays, lack of resources, and lack of political will to implement them in a time-bound manner.

HANGING IRE PART-I

In former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda's hometown, Hassan, a greenfield airport project that was launched 20 years ago is yet to be completed. The greenfield airport at Vijayapura cannot take off as the state government has not obtained environmental clearance.

In Namma Bengaluru, the tech capital of the country, the State Government is going ahead with the implementation of a tunnel road project despite opposition from experts and civil society. However, barring Namma Metro, not much progress has been achieved in mobility in one of the fastest-growing cities in the world. Irrigation and drinking water projects that could transform drought-prone districts are stuck due to various reasons, including environmental clearance and alleged fund crunch.

As Chief Minister Siddaramaiah prepares to present the state budget on March 6, TNIE does an audit of unkept promises by successive governments to remind the political class that planning without performance does not serve people's cause.

PROJECTS IN LIMBO: P4

KARNATAKA VS J&K

Cricket caught at silly point: Headbutting makes headline in Ranji final

TV grab of the headbutting incident involving Paras Dogra and KV Aneesh during the Ranji Trophy final between Karnataka and J&K on Wednesday | X

FIROZ MIRZA @ Chennai

HEADBUTTING is relatively unknown in cricket. An act immortalised by one of the geniuses of world football — Zinedine Zidane, found its way on to the cricket ground in Hubballi.

Karnataka's batter K V Aneesh was born in 2001, the same year when domestic veteran Paras Dogra made his first-class debut. Almost 25 years later, the two crossed paths at the grandest stage of the domestic cricket—Ranji Trophy final — with the 41-year-old Dogra headbutting Aneesh on Day 2 with his team, Jammu and Kashmir posting 527/6.

The incident took place during the 101st over of the innings when Dogra awkwardly fended off a rising delivery from India pacer Prasidh Krishna. Soon after, he rushed towards Aneesh, who was stationed in as a close in fielder and headbutted him though gently. Aneesh was also wearing a helmet. Karnataka's experienced batter Mayank Agarwal also got involved with Dogra. Karnataka captain Devdutt Padikkal deciding to talk to the umpires. Apparently, Aneesh was commenting on the veteran's batting despite him scoring more than 10,000 runs in his career.

The J&K skipper tried to downplay the incident saying it wasn't a big thing after the day's play while the on-field drama brought back memories of the past to team's head coach Ajay Sharma. "It was just in the little heat of the moment. Not a big thing. Yeah, it is all settled now. That's (a hot day) a different thing and it was momentary. We started talking and chatting after that so it's all well," Dogra told reporters. He is set to be penalised by BCCI.

Former India all-rounder Sharma witnessed the scuffle from the sidelines when a past incident crossed his mind. It involved West Zone pacer Rashid Patel who chased North Zone opener Raman Lamba with a stump in his hand following an on-field altercation in 1990-91 Duleep Trophy final.